

www.nelson-atkins.org

816.561.4000 Telephone
816.561.4011 Facsimile

The
Nelson-Atkins
Museum
of Art

4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64111

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fantastical Environment in Immersive Multimedia Installation at Nelson-Atkins

World Premiere of Artist Saya Woolfalk Creation Opens March 1

Kansas City, MO. Feb. 20, 2019—Visitors to The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City will be transported to a fantastical world created by artist Saya Woolfalk when they experience *Saya Woolfalk: Expedition to the ChimaCloud*, an immersive, multimedia exhibition created for the Nelson-Atkins that opens March 1. *Expedition to the ChimaCloud* incorporates cultural hybridization, technology, identity, spiritual rituals, and science fiction to continue the extensive narrative of a fictional race of half-plant, half female beings created by Woolfalk called the Empathics.



“This exhibition blends science fiction and fantasy to re-imagine the world in multiple dimensions,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, Menefee D. and Mary Louise Blackwell CEO & Director of the Nelson-Atkins. “The utopian world created by Saya Woolfalk challenges us to explore hybridity and Afrofuturism in our increasingly multi-cultural society.”

Multiple interrelated works will tell the story of the ChimaCloud, an alternate digital universe created by the Empathics. For this installation, Woolfalk drew her inspiration directly from the Nelson-Atkins permanent collection, particularly the renowned Chinese collection.

“Saya Woolfalk’s work is a hybrid of immersive experiences and a rich utopian narrative that encourages visitors to open their minds to new possibilities and futures,” said Sarah Biggerstaff, who curated the exhibition.

Expedition to the ChimaCloud tells the story of the ChimaCloud, an alternate digital universe discovered by the fictional corporation ChimaTEK. In the gallery, the Empathics will demonstrate various functions of the ChimaCloud, most importantly how it is accessed using custom liminality headdresses built with 3D printed objects, colorful ceramic disks, and metal mandalas. Projections of confetti-like bursts of color that morph into digital versions of the liminality headdress knit the various components of the ChimaCloud together. Through a combination of projection, textiles, sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, painting, plexi, and ambient sound, Woolfalk will bring the Empathics and the ChimaCloud to life at the Nelson-Atkins.

“One of the first things I always hope to do is have people feel a little bit dislocated,” said Woolfalk. “And I hope what happens when they’re somewhat dislocated and unclear of where they are that they become open, and that sense of openness stays with them and they bring it into their everyday lives.”

Special programs related to this exhibition include a talk by Saya Woolfalk in Atkins Auditorium at on Thursday, May 9. Exhibition curator Sarah Biggerstaff will give two talks Friday, March 5 at 6:30 and 7 p.m., and the Afrofuturist film *Hello Rain* will be screened Saturday, May 11 at 1 p.m.

Expedition to the ChimaCloud closes Sept. 1.

Image credit: Saya Woolfalk, American (born 1979). ChimaTEK: Virtual Chimeric Space, 2015-2016. Multi-media installation, 15 x 25 x 5 feet. Projection: 3:59 minutes. Seattle Art Museum. Purchased with funds from Josef Vascovitz and Lisa Goodman, Alida and Christopher Latham, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Art Acquisition Fund, 2017.16. Photo: Nathaniel Willson.

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America’s finest art museums. The museum, which strives to be the place *where the power of art engages the spirit of community*, opens its doors free of charge to people of all backgrounds. The museum is an institution that both challenges and comforts, that both inspires and soothes, and it is a destination for inspiration, reflection and connecting with others.

The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access to its renowned collection of more than 41,000 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the

region. In 2017, the Nelson-Atkins celebrates the 10-year anniversary of the Bloch Building, a critically acclaimed addition to the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building.

The Nelson-Atkins is located at 45th and Oak Streets, Kansas City, MO. Hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Thursday/Friday, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Admission to the museum is free to everyone. For museum information, phone 816.751.1ART (1278) or visit nelson-atkins.org.

For media interested in receiving further information, please contact:

Kathleen Leighton, Manager, Media Relations and Video Production
The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art
816.751.1321
kleighton@nelson-atkins.org